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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

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Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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893 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and [788] filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle over her body on her return.

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or them visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings.

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the difference of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one, or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear 'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of 'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her marriage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma. Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls. One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immediately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent himself from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs.*

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it. [867]

852 304 [949] The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

852 ● 431 Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact. [118]

431 In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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[584] repeated by the girl's father: 'I have married my daughter X to Y accepting the payment on which the people of the two sides concerned have agreed in the manner prescribed by the Holy Book and the Way of the Prophet.' The contract was then signed by the two fathers as well as another witness for each side.[1] This was followed by the reading of the 'Fatiha' and [583] the giving of the marriage-payment (mahr) to the bride's father. In this case the amount was ten pounds paid in advance and two pounds to be paid later. According to the village practice, the payment always consists of two parts; the greater part (usually three-quarters of the total) is paid over after writing the contract and is called 'mugaddam' (in advance), [586] while the other, called 'muakhar' (the delayed), is only payable in case of divorce. All these procedures in the ceremony described here were followed, as usual, by a specially prepared meal ending with the reading of the 'Fatiha' and a prayer to God that He might help in making this marriage successful and fruitful. While all this was taking place, the girl's mother and her female relatives, but not the boy's mother or his female relatives, were singing and uttering their joy-cries now and again. The 'maazoon' then left with his money gift from the bridegroom's father and sugar and corn from the bride's family. Thus the ceremony of 'agreement' (tibah) ended.

The agreement between the two families was followed by their fixing [585] the 'night of marriage' (lailat addukhla), and this followed a fortnight later.[2] In the meanwhile, the bridegroom took his weekly presents to the ●[431] girl's house on the market day. These presents usually consist of meat, sweets, fruit and similar delicacies. The girl's mother returned the handkerchief on the basket in which these gifts were sent with presents of pigeons and flour. During his visits in this period, the boy, as expected, was not allowed to see the girl, being usually met by the mother and father. During this period also the girl's family were preparing her house and [342] decorating it. They had to build an extra room, and thus the newly-weds' apartment consisted of two rooms, one with a completely covered roof with only two small holes as windows, while the front room was half-covered. This is a typical way of building a house in Silwa, making the inner room for use in winter and the outer for summer. At the same time, the girl's family were getting together her jewellery, by buying bits and borrowing others.

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl composed of two black

[1] According to Islamic Law there must be two witnesses for each side to sanction the marriage. It must be noted here that the writing of the contract at this stage is not like an engagement; it is religiously binding as if actual marriage had taken place. If the bride or the bridegroom happens to die immediately after the contract, the surviving partner is entitled to have a share in any property.

[2] It literally means 'the night on which the bridegroom enters in unto the bride'. It must also be noted here that Moslems regard marriage as essentially a civil contract, the validity of which depends only on the agreement of both sides. See Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, London, 1914.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl [Composed of two black 584
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [591]
with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in 585
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their 431
contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. 585
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 — 4 girls] 195

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

585 Behind this small gathering of men and a great crowd of children, followed the female procession crying out shrills and singing.

After the evening prayer the bridegroom offered a meal to those who [431] were in the procession, as well as others who were invited, after which contributions from men began to be received in the 'haircutting' ceremony. The details of announcement of contributions are exactly the same as those described earlier for the circumcision ceremony.* While the bridegroom or 'The Prince', as he is usually called on such an occasion, was [302] having his hair cut, the circle of 'the boys of romance'† was in full swing outside the house; other adolescent boys were engaged in mock fighting with their staves.

As the contribution ceremony ended, the crowd of boys stopped their organized playing and singing and showed signs of excitement and anticipation for the next event, when the bridegroom in his best clothes, a dagger tied to his waist and a stick in hand, had to go to meet the bride. Immediately the bridegroom came out of the house, another procession was organized. The procession was led by a strong youth taking a camel-load of wheat, corn, lentils and beans which was to be the bridegroom's provisions for three months. The bridegroom himself was amidst a group of his friends, who were reciting the traditional song of: 'O God, Praise our Prophet; our hearts love him because he will save us from Hell.' At the very rear came the procession of women, and the whole procession moved towards the bride's house.

As the singing and beating of the drums were heard by the bride's people, they came out with her, face and body covered, and in the care of her mother and the midwife, with another girl walking beside them carrying candles and corn on a tray on her head. Other women and girls were following in a state of great excitement. When the two processions met, the midwife took the bride to the bridegroom. On her face being uncovered to see him, he was prepared to sprinkle her face with some milk which he had in his mouth and would expel with force.[1] At this moment the excitement reached its peak as the boys around the bridegroom sang at the top of their voices, 'The roses are blossoming. She is rightfully thine, she is rightfully thine.'[2]

The tension between the bridegroom's maternal and paternal relations [518] reached its highest a short time later when the traditional mock fight began over the loaded camel. This fight usually takes place just in front of the bride's house, where some boys belonging to the bridegroom's family try to take the camel back to where it came from, while other boys from the bride's family try to prevent them from doing so and lead the camel to

[1] It is by no means the first time the bride and bridegroom saw each other, which might be inferred from such a ritual.

[2] It is one of the signs of a 'good man' not to show any signs of embarrassment, and to be able to aim the milk right at the bride's face, otherwise he would be chaffed about it. [518] On this occasion, although the bridegroom did this job properly, he was not spared some criticism especially from those who were in favour of a marriage with his paternal cousin.

* [See Category 116, P. 119 -- Analyst]
† [See Category 116, P. 186 -- Analyst]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself.

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people.

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child.

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth!

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood-

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḳṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home.

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared.

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791 832 [291] • 431 152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

THE FELLĀḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥḳ*, which are

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

In another part of Egypt where I have attended this ceremony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3.

[2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

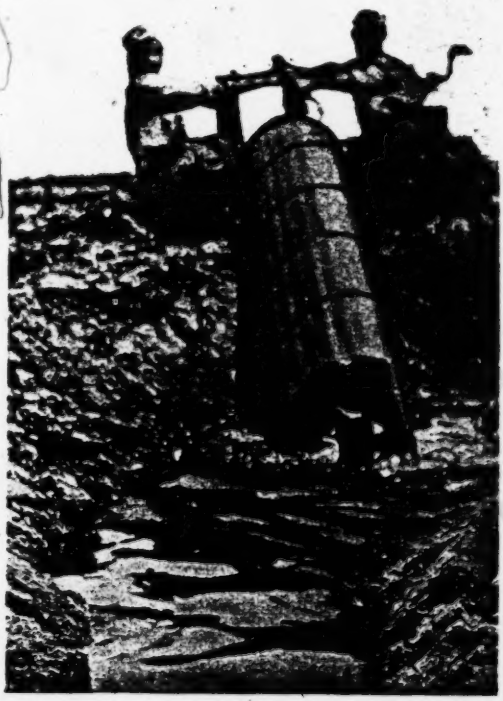

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only. The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿId eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿId el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿId el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

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after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

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[532]

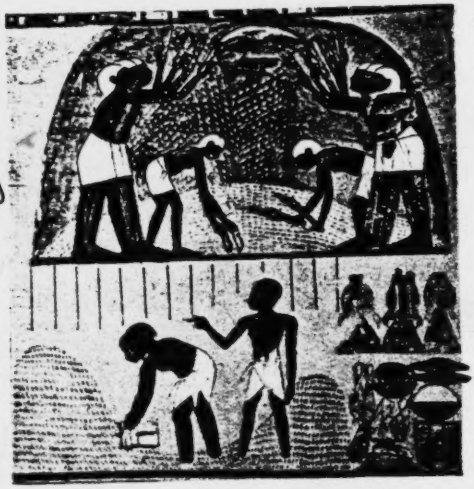

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FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]

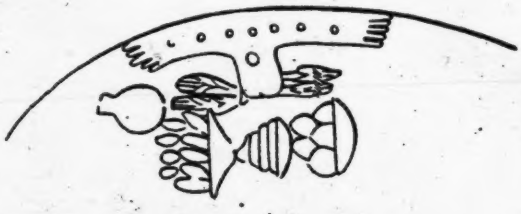

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥeḳat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏt*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran. F 782 796 516

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants. F C 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian. C F 191 198 788

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday. F C 785 262

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents. F 735 782 431

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*". C F 794 554 [532]

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of F 778

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah : 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

553 852 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 243 431 465 The word *fiṭâma*, used for the weaning of children, is also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother, for it is the last day of suckling.

243 777 789 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts. Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 789 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in November 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 465 431 735 248 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque, the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (44).

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and a doctor to come every week from the town. He has established a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assistant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses, gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-index of each family, and records its progress. She brings the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing, and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the *'ezba* were washing themselves once a week, though they used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower-baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable *ab'adiya* (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock who has been living and working there for twenty-seven years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. They are each allowed one or two feddans for their requirements of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2)

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer).

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients.

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants.

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast,[1] the first for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green, and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes, their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty, equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a happy new year, though the new year will not come for three months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving another in any capacity on this day receives from his master a money present or at least a new garment. The women also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, however, as the second day of the feast some persons who are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell;

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[716] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dordk*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a
[431] sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[553] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms.

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation.

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given